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New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 60, 61, 63-81 *(continued)*

Introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Congo to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/l.15.

Mr. Bakala (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): As the representative of the country currently presiding over the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, it is my honour to introduce the draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.15, on regional confidence-building measures.

As I speak in this Committee, the subregion of Central Africa is again the theatre of deadly confrontations that threaten to undo the efforts made at several levels to promote trust and to establish peace and sustainable development in that part of the continent.

As all representatives here are aware, the subregion of Central Africa, which has more than 75 million inhabitants and is replete with natural resources, has long been shaken by conflicts of every sort. These conflicts have not only cost the lives of millions of people, but have also hampered real development and exacerbated tension and distrust among the countries of the subregion.

Mindful of this situation and recognizing that the responsibility for ensuring peace and security in their countries is primarily their own, the Governments of the countries of Central Africa have undertaken a series of actions to strengthen confidence and restore stability throughout the subregion. It is within this context, and bearing in mind the primary role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, that they solicited the assistance of our world Organization.

In response, in 1992 the General Assembly established the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa as a forum for cooperation among the countries of the subregion.

Since its establishment, as reflected in the various reports of the Secretary-General, the member countries of the Committee have adopted a series of measures aimed at strengthening trust both within and among States.

Among these measures, the most important involve the following: the adoption of a typology of crises and conflicts in Central Africa, enabling us objectively to identify threats to peace in the subregion within States or in their respective relations; the establishment of specialized units for peacekeeping operations in the armies of each member State, so as to facilitate their participation in future peacekeeping operations in the subregion — and it should be noted that the first training seminars for these units was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 9 to 17 September 1996; the adoption of the Brazzaville Declaration on Cooperation for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which, *inter alia*, seeks to strengthen cooperation among the countries of the subregion and the organs of the United Nations system in order to harmonize their joint action for peace and progress in Central Africa; the convening of the First Summit of

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Heads of State and Government of the countries of the subregion in Yaoundé on 8 July 1996 and the adoption of a final Declaration, in which they commit to undertaking a certain number of concrete actions — see document A/51/274; the signing by the Heads of State and Government of Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe and Zaire of a Non-Aggression Pact between the States of Central Africa. The signed text of this Pact was officially submitted on 23 October 1996 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon and current President of the Organization of African Unity, whose country is the depository of the covenant; the decision of the Heads of State and Government to promote systems of participatory governance as a way to prevent conflicts in Central Africa. In this regard, the member countries of the Committee decided to hold a subregional conference at Brazzaville, Congo, in January 1997, on the topic "Democratic institutions and peace in Central Africa."

The tragic events unfolding in Zaire jeopardize the major steps I have just enumerated, although they do not call them into question. On the other hand, these events demonstrate the relevance and scope of the work of the Committee, which more than ever deserves the support of the international community. It is appropriate here to reiterate the thanks of the countries of the subregion to the international community for its tireless support, without which the Committee would have had great difficulty in achieving the important steps we are commanding today.

Recently, the Committee has been forced to decrease the pace of its activities, reducing the number of its ministerial meetings from two to one a year, because of the financial crisis of the United Nations. These meetings make cooperation possible between senior officials on security questions within the Member countries of the Committee.

Thus, last April, the eighth meeting of the Committee, held in Yaoundé, made it possible for the Ministers of the 11 member countries to cooperate in preparing the First Summit of Heads of State and Government. We believe that it is important to increase this type of meeting, which, by helping to develop and strengthen high-level personal contacts, contribute to establishing and promoting mutual trust among States.

Furthermore, the recent challenges to peace and security that our States are confronting today require not only the continuation and even augmentation of assistance from the international community, but also the restructuring of the United Nations services, with the goal of enhancing the efficacy of their actions.

Apart from the services of the secretariat of the Committee, whose role and expertise remain useful for carrying out the Committee's programme of work, the new crises in the subregion prompt us to aim for a better harmonization and rationalization of the services of the Secretary-General on policies regarding peace and security in the subregion of Central Africa.

As is clear in paragraph 8 of our draft resolution, the initiatives taken by the Heads of State and Government of the subregion will be better and fully implemented only with the help of a Secretariat structure able to respond in a united and effective manner to these demands. It is in this context that we should understand the request to the Secretary-General, contained in paragraph 15 of the draft resolution, which is essentially the same as paragraph 10 of resolution 50/71 B, adopted by consensus at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The draft resolution has two basic goals: first, to reflect the progress made in the Advisory Committee; and secondly, to solicit the continued support of the Assembly for the efforts of member States of the Committee, particularly in the face of the new dangers in the subregion.

Let us now consider draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.15 paragraph by paragraph. The preamble contains the same basic elements as resolution 50/71 B of 12 December 1995, which was adopted by consensus.

Turning to the operative section, the first three paragraphs are likewise similar to the text of the previous resolution. Paragraph 4 welcomes the fact that the Committee's programme of work has led since 1992 to specific actions and measures. This point is also reflected in the Secretary-General's annual reports on the work of the Committee.

Paragraph 5 takes note of the historic holding of the First Summit of States and Government of the Countries Members of the Committee. This Summit, which was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on 8 July 1996, as an adjunct to the Organization of African Unity Summit, was the first of its kind to bring together the leaders of the subregions to consider sensitive security questions.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 are concerned with the Non-Aggression Pact. The General Assembly, in previous

resolutions, welcomed the adoption of this Pact in 1993 and called for its signature and entry into force.

Paragraph 6 welcomes with satisfaction the signature of the Pact this year. In the same paragraph, the General Assembly reaffirms its conviction that the Pact is likely to contribute to the prevention of conflicts and further confidence-building in the Central African subregion.

In connection with paragraph 7, we would inform delegations that nine countries out of the 11 member States of the Committee have already signed the Non-Aggression Pact. These nine countries are Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe and Zaire. Paragraph 7 invites the countries that have not yet signed the Pact to do so and encourages all member States to expedite its ratification.

Paragraph 8 welcomes with satisfaction the important steps contained in the final Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the First Summit of Heads of State and Government of the countries members of the Committee. We would voice the hope here that the General Assembly and the international community will lend their full support to the implementation of these measures.

The first part of paragraph 9 expresses the support that is shared by the international community regarding the promotion and strengthening of the democratic process as a means to prevent conflicts.

The second part of this same paragraph welcomes the decision to hold a subregional conference at Brazzaville, Congo, in January 1997, on the topic "Democratic institutions and peace in Central Africa". The member States of the Committee have already begun to prepare for that conference and I take this opportunity once again to call upon the States Members of the United Nations and all intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to lend their support and make this important conference a success.

Paragraphs 10 to 12 deal with the first training seminar for special units for peacekeeping operations, which took place from 9 to 17 September 1996 at Yaoundé, Cameroon. We wish to stress the need to continue this type of training programme, which makes it possible for our respective States to strengthen their ability to take a more active part in the peacekeeping operations in the subregion. To the Secretary-General, we express our gratitude for the steps taken to organize this first training seminar and we reiterate our gratitude to the Government of Japan for its contribution, which made it possible to hold that seminar.

Paragraphs 13 and 14 are of crucial importance. Indeed, during this financial crisis in our Organization, we cannot stress enough the well-foundedness of voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund, making it possible fully to implement the programme of work of the Committee.

We would like sincerely to thank the States that have contributed to the Fund and those that intend to. Our thanks go as well to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and, more specifically, to the Department of Political Affairs and the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, for their constant support of the Committee, which the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide.

In paragraph 16, the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to submit at its fifty-second session a report on the implementation of this resolution. In paragraph 17, the final paragraph of this draft, it decides to include the item entitled "Regional confidence-building measures" in the provisional agenda at its fifty-second session.

Before I conclude my statement, I should like to express, on behalf of all the sponsors of this draft, our hope that this draft resolution will be adopted in due course by consensus, as was the case at the last session.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Colombia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.14.

Mr. García (Colombia): It is an honour for Colombia to introduce, on behalf of the members of the non-aligned countries, the draft resolution on the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.14.

In regard to this draft resolution, the Non-Aligned Movement considers that it is very useful to continue working within the First Committee on the ideas contained in the resolution on this matter, submitted by the Movement last year and adopted by a very large majority of delegations.

This year, the proposal intends to be more comprehensive, including references not only to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, but also to

other existing international agreements in the field of disarmament and arms control — such as the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof — and subjects linked to the preservation of the world's environment, such as the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and the issue of any use of nuclear or radioactive wastes as a radiological method of warfare.

The Non-Aligned Movement will be in touch with interested delegations in order to work closely with them in an attempt to achieve the possibility of consensus on this draft resolution, to which we attach great importance.

Over two years of hard work and negotiations came to a close on 3 May this year when the Review Conference of the States Parties to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons adopted its Final Report. The Chairman of the Review Conference, Ambassador Johan Molander, reported to this Committee a few weeks ago on the successful conclusion of the Conference. He also recalled the new provisions of the strengthened Protocol II, so I will not repeat them here. Suffice it to say that the Review Conference made considerable progress by means of restrictions and partial prohibitions on anti-personnel landmines and of banning a completely new type of weapon, the blinding laser weapons.

The purpose of the 1980 Convention is to place constraints upon the conduct of war. The Convention and its annexed Protocols constitute an important part of international law in armed conflicts by restricting the use of certain conventional weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.40 welcomes the fact that additional States have ratified or accepted the Convention. So far, the Convention has entered into force for 62 States. However, accession to these instruments must ultimately be universal. Consequently, the draft resolution urgently calls upon all States that have not yet done so to take all measures to become parties as soon as possible, to the Convention and its Protocols.

Under the new rules of the amended Protocol II on anti-personnel mines, none of the current crisis situations relating to landmines could have occurred at such a scale. In the draft resolution, the General Assembly would call on the States Parties to express their consent to be bound by the Protocol with a view to its entry into force as soon as possible, and it would also commend the Protocol to all States with a view to achieving the widest possible adherence to this instrument. If implemented, these rules would reduce or eliminate the risks to civilians and non-combatants and would definitely save lives. This would make a major humanitarian difference.

The draft resolution also commends the Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons. The new Protocol prohibits the employment of laser weapons specifically designed to cause permanent blindness, as well as the transfer of any such weapons to any State or non-State entity. For the first time, a weapon developed and produced in prototype has been banned before it was even deployed.

On behalf of the sponsors, I express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.40 will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.34.

Mr. Sinclair (Canada): It is a great honour for Canada to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.34, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields". It is particularly welcome that we can do so on behalf of our joint sponsor on this text, Brazil, and also on behalf of our co-sponsors: Austria, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sweden.

We believe that this is a very simple and straightforward text and a very simple and straightforward draft resolution. The basic premise is to encourage bilateral and multilateral dialogue so as to promote international understanding and cooperation on the basis of the concepts identified in the preambular paragraphs of this draft: that scientific and technological developments could have both civilian and military applications and that progress and science and technology for civilian applications need to be maintained and encouraged.

There are two operational components to this draft resolution. The first is to ensure the implementation of the relevant commitments already undertaken under international legal instruments and the second is to explore ways and means of further developing international legal rules on transfers of high technology with military applications.

This text does not attempt to resolve the differences that we know exist among delegations in this room. It does not take a particular position on the answers to these questions. It merely encourages and invites Member States to enhance bilateral and multilateral dialogue on these important issues. We would hope that, as a neutral, politically inclined endorsement of dialogue, this text will be supported by all delegations and be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Lamaziere (Brazil): I would like to express the support of the Brazilian delegation for draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.34 on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields, which has just been introduced by the representative of Canada.

The history of the draft resolution goes back to the four years between 1991 and 1994, during which the United Nations Disarmament Commission considered an agenda item with the same title. As many present here may remember, the Commission came very close to adopting consensual guidelines on the role of science and technology and international security, with the emphasis on transfers of high technology with military applications, the so-called dual-use technologies. It is very unfortunate that the Disarmament Commission could not agree on the draft guidelines at that time. The issue of transfers of dual-use technology and its implications for non-proliferation, disarmament and technological developments is one on which agreement between supplier and recipient countries is essential. Had those guidelines been adopted then, developed and developing countries would now have a more solid base for dialogue on this crucial issue.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.34 serves the useful purpose of reminding the international community of the need for dialogue on this issue. It does not present the point of view of only one group of countries, but rather provides an invitation to dialogue among all. We recognize the difficulties that have impeded agreement on the subject and that is why the sponsors, Brazil and Canada, have, since the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, stripped the text of its substantive elements, with the exception of the essential parametres of the issue.

With the exception of the biannualization of the item, this draft resolution has the same text as resolution 50/63, which was adopted by a vote of 157 to none, with 9 abstentions. We consider that this draft resolution serves the interest of all countries without exception and we invite those that have abstained for historical reasons to allow it to be adopted without a vote this year. Such a result would signal a welcome willingness to engage in dialogue on the important topic of transfers of dual-use technology in the context of international security.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolution A/C.1.51/L.37.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased on behalf of the sponsors to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37, entitled "Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons", pursuant to its request to include this sub-item in the agenda of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly under item 71, "General and complete disarmament".

It may be recalled that by its resolution 49/75 K, adopted on 15 December 1994, the General Assembly, pursuant to Article 96, paragraph 1, of the Charter, requested the International Court of Justice urgently to render an advisory opinion on the following question:

> "Is the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any circumstance permitted under international law?"

Written statements were submitted to the Court by 28 Member States, and in the course of public sittings held from 30 October to 15 November 1995, the Court heard oral statements from 22 countries. Malaysia was one of those States which presented both written and oral statements to the Court.

At a public sitting on 8 July 1996, the International Court of Justice recognized for the first time in history that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law, also recognizing that there exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

It is not my intention to elaborate on the Court's Opinion, which is well understood. It suffices for me to say that the pronouncement made by the highest international legal authority is of historic importance and cannot be dismissed. It is important in that it has set the legal parameter whereby the use of nuclear weapons indeed ignores customary international law and international treaties such as the Geneva and Hague Conventions. It is important also for the reason that it points out the direction of international action in addressing this issue, upon which

hinges the very survival of mankind. The threat to its survival by the existence of nuclear weapons grants the international community the right to take a position on the legality of such weapons.

The General Assembly had requested the Advisory Opinion in order to assist its activities in the area of nuclear disarmament. The rendering of this Opinion by the International Court of Justice has a direct impact on the activities of the General Assembly and on the policies and obligations of Member States in the area of nuclear disarmament.

My delegation believes that the General Assembly should acknowledge the Court for rendering an opinion in response to the its request. The draft resolution before this Committee seeks to do that. It, *inter alia*, expresses the appreciation of the General Assembly to the Court for responding to the request made by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. It takes note of the Court's Opinion and underlines its unanimous conclusion that

> "There exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." *(A/C.1/51/L.37, para. 3)*

More importantly, it calls upon all States to fulfil that obligation immediately by commencing multilateral negotiations in 1997 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.

To date the draft resolution has been sponsored by some 30 Member States: Afghanistan, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and Malaysia. To these delegations my delegation wishes to express its sincere thanks and appreciation. In sponsoring the resolution these Member States share Malaysia's conviction that the Court's Opinion is an important and positive development in the nuclear disarmament process, and should be built on. It would not be enough merely to take note of it, or even to welcome it, and then to forget about it. The learned judges of the International Court of Justice have made it very clear that the international community has not only an obligation to pursue negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but also to bring to a conclusion such negotiations.

The call for the commencement of negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention is a necessary one. It is necessary because the existence of a legal obligation would require early, indeed immediate, action. The existence today of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States, 28 years after the signing of the NPT, is a sobering reminder that negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects have been carried out neither in good faith nor in earnest. In the days of the cold war the heightened tension between East and West was blamed for the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament. With the demise of that destructive phase of human history there is no longer that excuse. On the contrary, the current constructive phase in international relations would argue for more serious and concerted efforts on the part of the international community to strive for more concrete achievements in the field of nuclear disarmament. This opportunity should not be lost to the international community. It should be grasped, and grasped firmly, as it might not present itself again.

This draft resolution seeks to do just that. It serves to remind the international community of this solemn obligation and urges it to commence the process of negotiations which would lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The waiting period has been far too long — a quarter of a century too long. It is now time for serious action. By joining the NPT in overwhelming numbers, the non-nuclear-weapon States struck a bargain with the nuclear-weapon States whereby in exchange for giving up the nuclear option by the non-nuclear-weapon States there would be negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to ending the nuclear-arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. In May 1995 this bargain was renewed; indeed, a second trade-off was made when, in exchange for the indefinite extension of the NPT without a vote, the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed their commitments as stated in article VI of the Treaty to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and their determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons.

The NPT addressed the issue of nuclear proliferation, which for the most part has been successfully curbed thanks to the adherence to the Treaty by the non-nuclear-weapon States. The time has now come for the issue of the elimination of nuclear weapons, which is an equally important, indeed integral, part of the NPT process, to be addressed in a serious fashion by the international community. Unless this issue is addressed, and addressed promptly, I am afraid the entire bargain or trade-off will be questioned by many non-nuclear-weapon States parties, a few of which have already expressed their unhappiness and are beginning to question, both privately and publicly, the purpose of their continued adherence to what is clearly a lopsided Treaty which favours the nuclear-weapon States. If this trend were to continue, it would only undermine the integrity of the Treaty and jeopardize its prospects for attaining universality.

It cannot be denied that bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament have a place on the disarmament agenda and, in fact, have contributed significantly to the reduction of nuclear weapons, as evidenced by the START I and START II processes, which should logically lead to early negotiations for a START III. However, as the Court's Opinion has clearly stated, this does not absolve the nuclear-weapon States from their obligation to conduct multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, involving other members of the international community which have an equal responsibility. The Court has unanimously affirmed that the obligation to negotiate on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects belongs to all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, and that this obligation includes bringing the negotiations to a conclusion. It is clear that the obligation to negotiate on nuclear disarmament exists independently and is not linked to negotiations on a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

My delegation believes that the objective of commencing serious multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons is one that no Member State in all earnestness could oppose, for, to do so would be to justify the continued existence of nuclear weapons, with all the attendant risks to global security and human survival. It would also be to deny the cherished aspirations of humanity for a world entirely free of these weapons of mass destruction. It is for that reason that the Canberra Commission, which was set up by the former Australian Government, was persuaded

> "that immediate and determined efforts need to be made to rid the world of nuclear weapons and the threat they pose to it".

It regarded the proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used as utterly incredible and agreed that

> "the only complete defence ... is the elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they will never be produced again".

The views of the Canberra Commission are particularly pertinent considering the fact that its members, included leading authorities on nuclear disarmament, some of whom had earlier in their careers participated actively in formulating the nuclear doctrines and strategies of their countries.

On the basis of these arguments, my delegation commends draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37 for the consideration, sponsorship or support of all delegations that share these sentiments and are opposed to the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and that would like to ensure that concrete and effective steps are taken now to pave the way for their total elimination within a realistic time-frame, in the interest of ensuring the well-being and survival of humanity.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.20/Rev.1.

Ms. Ghose (India): I have the honour to introduce today a draft resolution entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", as contained in document A/C.1/51/L.20/Rev.1, on behalf of the delegations of Bhutan, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guyana, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Singapore, Sri Lanka and India. This draft resolution is one which we, the sponsors, believe addresses an issue of great importance not only for countries seeking to promote the social and economic well-being of their peoples, but also for the international community as a whole.

It is widely acknowledged that the developmental needs of countries today require infusions of technology; technology, which in some cases, may also have military applications. We recognize that the development and transfers of such dual-use and high technologies with possible military applications need to be monitored and

regulated in the interests of international security. We also recognize, however, that the application of such technologies for civilian and peaceful purposes needs to be not only maintained and encouraged, but indeed promoted.

There are therefore two distinct aspects to the issue as seen from the point of view of this draft resolution, first, that the development of technology should, as far as possible, in the interest of international security, be directed towards civilian rather than military applications. To quote from a document to which I will refer later:

> "Technology by itself does not threaten anyone ... It is also unrealistic to believe that the process of technological innovation can be frozen to prevent its military application. However, the very technologies capable of improving existing weapons systems can also often be used in their limitation, destruction or conversion. A few of the many areas in which militarily capable technologies could actually promote rather than threaten international security are the use of communication technologies for advanced warning of impending conflicts, the employment of remote-sensing techniques for verification and the development of appropriate techniques for ecologically safe methods of weapons disposal." *(A/45/568, para. 13)*

The second aspect of this issue, as we see it, is to make dual-use and high technologies available on a regulated yet non- discriminatory basis to countries that wish to utilize them for civilian and peaceful purposes. This regulation, however, cannot in our view, be through the ad hoc export regimes that have been and continue to be set up, which in effect are no more than exclusive groupings of countries that limit the exchanges of such technologies among themselves while denying access to others that may require them for developmental purposes. Such ad hoc regimes tend to become commercial and economic barriers to normal trade and therefore to the social and economic development of States, particularly developing countries.

On the other hand, as we know only too well, such regimes have not been very effective in achieving their stated goal: the control of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the view of the sponsors, the regulation of the flows of such dual-use and high technology should, to be effective and efficient, be internationally applicable on the basis of multilaterally negotiated and universally accepted guidelines. In 1990, in implementation of several General Assembly resolutions, a high-level conference on new trends in science and technology and their implications for international peace and security was held at Sendai in Japan. The conference was attended by scientists, strategic analysts, arms limitation and disarmament experts, politicians and diplomats from over 20 countries. The outcome of this conference is set out in the report of the Secretary-General in document A/45/568 of 17 October 1990, a document from which I quoted earlier.

This was a useful first step in examining the issue. Unfortunately, there has been little or no follow-up at the intergovernmental level. Efforts to start or continue a dialogue on the subject are today stymied in almost every forum, whether in the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the ad hoc working group on biological weapons or even in our sole deliberative forum, the Disarmament Commission. In our view, the 1990 report now needs to be updated and further developed in order to take cognizance of the very significant developments that have taken place since that time. We expect that the updated report will contain recommendations which could assist States to address the issue of multilaterally negotiating universal guidelines monitoring the development and regulating the transfer of dual-use and high technologies.

The draft resolution therefore requests the Secretary-General to undertake this task and to present a report not later than the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, in 1998. If there are any financial implications to this request, we trust that the Secretariat will make all efforts, if necessary as with the Sendai conference, to meet the expenditure from extra-budgetary resources to carry out this task in the next two years.

This is an important and, we are aware, extremely sensitive subject. This should not however prevent us from making cautious progress towards the goal, with which few can find fault. We are aware of the other draft resolution with the same title. I listened with great care to its introduction today by the two leading sponsors, and to the proposal to hold a multilateral dialogue. That is an idea which we support.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Sri Lanka to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.3 and A/C.1/51/L.13.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): On behalf of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), permit me to introduce the draft

resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.3 on the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Preparatory Committee.

As members are well aware, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons adopted three decisions — decision 1 on strengthening the review process for the Treaty; decision 2 on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation; and decision 3 on the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — and a resolution on the Middle East.

The General Assembly, by its resolution 50/70 Q of 12 December 1995, took note of the three decisions and the adoption of the resolution by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

States Parties to the Treaty have decided to hold review conferences every five years and, accordingly, the next Review Conference is scheduled to be held in the year 2000. In paragraph 3 of decision 1, the Review and Extension Conference has also taken a decision to convene the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee in 1997.

The purpose of the Preparatory Committee meetings, referred to in paragraph 3 of decision 1, is amplified in paragraph 4:

> "to consider principles, objectives and ways in order to promote the full implementation of the Treaty, as well as its universality, and to make recommendations thereon to the Review Conference." *(NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), Annex, p. 8)*

The same paragraph also states that:

> "These meetings should also make the procedural preparations for the next Review Conference." *(ibid.)*

In the circumstances, it is clear that the meetings of the Preparatory Committee should undertake both substantive and procedural work for the next Review Conference.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.3, which has been reissued for technical reasons, is purely a procedural one intended to fix the dates of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, which is now scheduled to take place from 7 to 18 April 1997 in New York. Paragraph 2 is intended to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to render the necessary assistance and to provide services as may be required for the 2000 Review Conference. As members are aware, the review process is not a United Nations function. Services are provided by the Organization upon request by the Parties to the Treaty and at their cost. The two operative paragraphs are therefore designed to secure conference facilities for the 2000 Review Conference.

A meeting of the States parties to the Treaty was held on 18 October in New York to consider the draft resolution. The parties to the Treaty, having considered the text, agreed that it be submitted to the General Assembly, through the First Committee, for adoption.

As the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.3 is applicable to the 185 Parties to the Treaty, it is the hope of my delegation that it will be adopted by the First Committee without a vote.

Sri Lanka is also pleased to introduce the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/51/L.13 on the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which has been submitted by Colombia on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Declaration has engaged the attention of the international community ever since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 2832 (XXVI) in 1971, for the implementation of which an Ad Hoc Committee was established in the following year. Eight years later, in July 1979, the Meeting of the Littoral and Hinterland States of the Indian Ocean was held, following which the Ad Hoc Committee moved into its next stage of work, strengthened by the expansion of its membership.

Due to its strategic and economic importance, the Indian Ocean has been a focus of attention for many centuries. During the colonial period, several European Powers collided with each other with the intention of carving out territories belonging to the littoral and hinterland States existing during that time, thus adversely affecting the development process and the security of the entire region.

The post-colonial era did not change the situation for the better, as the Indian Ocean region once again became an object of great-Power rivalry at the height of the cold war.

The intensity of the cold war, *inter alia*, prevented the Ad Hoc Committee from gaining much headway over the

past two decades. During that period, the wars in Afghanistan and between Iran and Iraq and the conflict in the Horn of Africa were cited as reasons by some members of the Security Council and the major maritime users that were members of the Ad Hoc Committee for their inability to reach agreement in the Ad Hoc Committee.

Today everybody tends to agree that the great-Power rivalry that hindered the work of the Ad Hoc Committee belongs to the past. The flames of conflict that engulfed some parts of the region in the past few decades have been smothered. A new era of international political relations has dawned, which, if consolidated fully, should bring an era of stability and prosperity to the countries in the region. Some preliminary steps have already been taken by the countries in the region in the sphere of economic development. These measures would bring the desired results if peace and security in the region could be secured and maintained. It is for this reason that the Ad Hoc Committee has repeatedly expressed its conviction that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee is important and would greatly facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. This view has been reflected in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.

There is a fear that the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean would result in hindering the freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean and overflights. Sri Lanka wishes to confirm that there is no intention on the part of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to impose such restrictions, which would be in contravention of obligations under such treaties as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Furthermore, the littoral and hinterland States certainly would not be seeking to contravene the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 51 thereof.

On the other hand, there is also a view that the Declaration, conceived during the height of the cold war, is out of date and, as such, irrelevant in the present context. It is the view of the non-aligned countries members of the Ad Hoc Committee that the United Nations should make use of the existing positive international climate to negotiate and reach agreement to preserve peace and security in this strategically and economically important region for all time. Such a measure could be described as preventive diplomacy, in other words; investing now for the future.

The Ad Hoc Committee has reached a crucial stage. After nearly a quarter of a century of its existence, a well-considered decision has to be taken on the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee. For that purpose, the Ad Hoc Committee is requested to hold a short session of a duration of not more than three days next year and then to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session. We believe that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users in such a session would provide an opportunity for a constructive dialogue and facilitate reaching a conclusion on the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, Sri Lanka would like to urge the members of the First Committee to support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.13.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.40.

Mr. Bjarme (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.40 on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country, Sweden.

We therefore hope that, as we had called for last year, there will be more consultations between delegations so that we could perhaps try and evolve a common position on this important subject in the future. We commend our draft resolution to the First Committee and we hope that it will attract the support of a very large number of delegations.

I would like now to make one comment on draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.37, which has just been introduced by the delegation of Malaysia. My delegation will be speaking on the nuclear cluster later, when draft resolutions in that cluster are being considered, but today after its

introduction, we would like to state for the record that we, as a sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.37, do not see this as in any way changing India's stand on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, notwithstanding the references to that Treaty and the Review Conference in two of the preambular paragraphs. Our sponsorship of this very important draft resolution, so ably introduced today, reflects our sincere support of the objectives of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.37.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.17.

Mrs. Kurokochi (Japan): I would like to start by recalling two resolutions entitled "Nuclear Disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", which were adopted by the General Assembly with wide support in 1994 and again in 1995. On both occasions, Japan took the initiative in presenting the draft resolution in accordance with its consistent position on nuclear disarmament. Japan firmly believes that we must make persistent efforts for the ultimate goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons and that this goal should be achieved through the implementation of various concrete and realistic measures.

In view of the importance of further promoting nuclear disarmament, Japan has decided to submit a draft resolution under the same title again this year, as contained in document A/C.1/51/L.17. This draft resolution is basically a follow-up to those adopted in previous years. The substantively new elements are as follows.

First, in the seventh preambular paragraph, it welcomes the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). No explanation is required for this addition, but I wish to point out that we value this Treaty as one of the concrete and realistic measures I mentioned that will lead to a world without nuclear weapons. Secondly, in paragraph 3 it calls upon all States parties to the NPT to make their best efforts for a smooth start of the strengthened NPT review process. We have added this paragraph because we regard the NPT review process as one of the most effective, realistic and solid frameworks for the promotion of nuclear disarmament. The principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons represent the very few existing commitments internationally agreed to by both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, in addition to the legal obligations enshrined in article VI of the NPT.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress once again Japan's firm belief that nuclear-weapon States must not interpret the indefinite extension of the NPT decided upon in 1995 as an authorization for them to possess nuclear weapons forever. As the principles and objectives made clear, nuclear-weapon States have a commitment to pursue with determination the reduction and ultimately the elimination of those weapons. By supporting the indefinite extension of the NPT, non-nuclear-weapon States committed themselves to the permanent non-possession of nuclear weapons with the expectation that the nuclear-weapon States would in return make progress in nuclear disarmament.

Japan believes that this draft resolution, by calling for the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear weapons with the aim of eliminating those weapons, can make an important contribution to our shared goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan hopes that the draft resolution will enjoy the widest possible support.

Before concluding, I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the text as it appears in document A/C.1/51/L.17. The text requires a few minor corrections of a technical nature and, although we have communicated these corrections to the Secretariat, it seems that a revised document will not appear due to budgetary constraints. First, in the third preambular paragraph, the name of the treaty should begin, "Treaty on Further Reduction ... ". Secondly, in subparagraph (a) of the sixth preambular paragraph, the word "the", should be eliminated from the text "and the utmost restraint" because we would like the text to conform strictly to that of last year's resolution.

Mr. Calovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I would like to make a few comments with regard to draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.1 on expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, A/C.1/51/L.5 on the report of the Disarmament Commission, A/C.1/51/L.17 on nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons, A/C.1/51/L.21 on bilateral nuclear arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament, and A/C.1/51/L.25 on the role of the Conference on Disarmament.

The main subject of all these texts is how disarmament negotiations should be organized and where they should take place. During last week's structured informal

discussion, the positions of the nuclear-weapon States and of the potential nuclear-weapon States were advanced and elaborated. There was nothing new, but it was interesting to hear them. Regrettably, we have not heard the position of the largest number of Member States — which I call the "silent-majority States" — which have no intention whatsoever of becoming nuclear-weapon States, but are extremely interested in seeing the process of nuclear disarmament achieve positive results. In their view, and in the view of my delegation, which is part of this very large group of countries, the positive results of nuclear disarmament are strengthening international security and international cooperation, which could have a positive impact on their national security and on their economic development. For these countries, the nuclear threat, practically speaking, does not exist. Our national security does not depend on nuclear weapons. We are, however, very interested in helping to bring about the end of the nuclear arms race and to see that the number of nuclear-weapon States does not increase.

For these reasons we strongly supported the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). For the silent-majority States, the most important concern is their national defence. Their intent is not a great number of weapons or large armies. With this in mind, they are paying much more attention to the quality and quantity of the weapons of the bigger States in their neighbourhoods than to the nuclear armament of the nuclear-weapon States. To speak plainly, much of the attention is paid to conventional weapons, to chemical and bacteriological weapons, and to the size and strength of the armies of neighbouring States. We are very keen to see endorsed and observed the principle that countries should be limited to the weapons necessary for national defence. Additional weapons should be the subject of bilateral or multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The position of the nuclear-weapon States not to negotiate nuclear disarmament with non-nuclear-weapon States in a multilateral forum is, to us, logical. At the same time, it is opportune and logical to expect the non-nuclear-weapon States, particularly the potential nuclear-weapon States, to insist on taking part in negotiations on nuclear disarmament. But when we discuss this topic we have to bear in mind the nature of the negotiations. And the nature of the negotiations is, in fact, a business and political affair. The participants in the negotiations have to put something on the negotiating table. The fact is that non-nuclear States and those that would like to become nuclear-weapon States, are not placing anything of importance on the negotiating table. The silent-majority States have nothing to put on the nuclear-disarmament negotiating table — except the concerns of mankind and the conscience of mankind. Given this situation, it is quite normal for some States to insist on participating in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament and for some other States to continue to refuse such requests.

In this state of affairs in our view, lies the problem of the Conference on Disarmament. This problem is not a new one. It has not been resolved in spite of many efforts in the past. The situation was just the same many years ago when I had the honour of being the President of the Conference on Disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament has no opportunity to make many choices at this moment. The only alternative is to face the new reality: to reform, and to get rid of the fiction that it is the only negotiating body, which it is only on paper. Without such reform, the Conference will not be able to escape its present difficult situation. The Conference succeeded in concluding the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CTBT, but as we see, the difficult situation has not been overcome.

We hold the view that the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament is an urgent matter. There is no basis whatsoever for the members of the Conference on Disarmament to block the membership of other States Members of the United Nations that wish to become members of the Conference. Given today's globalization, it is not appropriate to speak of permanent members of the Conference on Disarmament, or to say that some Member States can be members of the Conference but some cannot. In the future the Conference should rid itself of outdated items. Its agenda should be drafted on the basis of the present demands of the international situation in the field of disarmament, and not on the demands of 10 or 20 years ago.

Let me take this opportunity to suggest that the Conference on Disarmament should start work on concluding a convention on the limitation of conventional weapons. In the negotiation of such a convention, all States could participate: all have something to put on the negotiating table. The positive effect of concluding such a convention on the security situation of the silent-majority States will be much greater than that of many agreements on nuclear disarmament.

In our view, the Conference on Disarmament has important things to do in the years to come. Its tasks will require the political will and readiness of its members. I hope that things will develop in that direction.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Mongolia, who will introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.10.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): I take pleasure in introducing — on behalf of Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and Mongolia — draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.10, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific". In sponsoring the draft resolution, those countries are expressing their belief that the Kathmandu Centre for Peace and Disarmament is promoting an important trend in the complex Asia-Pacific region — a process of regional dialogue on disarmament and international security issues. This process, which has come to be known as the Kathmandu process, is, in our view contributing significantly towards the creation of greater awareness of disarmament issues, promoting the habit of dialogue in the region, and spreading global disarmament measures and principles into the Asia and Pacific region. The regional meetings organized by the Centre in 1996 in Kathmandu and Hiroshima played an important role in identifying pressing disarmament and security issues and exploring region-oriented responses.

The end of the cold war has given new dimensions to the disarmament and international-security agenda. The Asia-Pacific region, as one of the most complex and diverse regions of the world, is facing a challenging disarmament agenda in today's changed security environment. In these circumstances, the activities of the Kathmandu Centre for Peace and Disarmament have acquired greater importance by providing forums in which the regional concerns and issues related to global disarmament and security matters, as well as their interrelationships, are being discussed among the countries of the region. The sponsors of the draft resolution, as supporters of the activities of the Centre, welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/445), in which he underscored that the mandate of the Centre not only remains valid but is even more relevant today in the changed international environment.

We commend the Centre for its useful activities in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue to enhance openness, transparency and confidence-building. We consider it important that continued efforts be made to further intensify the Centre's activities and enlarge the area of discussions, by, *inter alia*, adding new urgent issues for in-depth discussion, perhaps including some new areas in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the Central Asian subregion.

While expressing our gratitude to the countries that have been supporting the Centre both financially and morally, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.10 once again appeal to Member States, particularly those within the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to continue to make voluntary contributions in order to strengthen the programme of activities of the Centre. The support of the international community, as well as continued cooperation on the part of the United Nations Secretariat, are essential to furthering the activities of the Centre. The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.10 hope that, like similar texts in the past, the draft resolution will enjoy the support of all Member States.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs and the Regional Centre for the material that they have made available to delegations on the results of the workshop on the experience of the Asia-Pacific region with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We are convinced that other delegations, like mine, will find this material not only interesting but also quite useful.

Mr. Bahador Thapa (Nepal): My delegation is speaking as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.10 on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which was just introduced by the representative of Mongolia. Last year, through the efforts of the then Chairman of the First Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun, Mongolia was instrumental in the adoption of resolution 50/71 D on the Centre. We wish to express our profound thanks to the current Permanent Representative of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Jargalsaikhany Enkhsaikhan for once again introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution on the Centre. This shows his country's continued support for the Centre.

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, also known as the Kathmandu Centre, has been providing a valuable forum for dialogue and consultation on disarmament issues. Each year, academicians and experts on disarmament matters from the region and beyond gather in Kathmandu and have frank exchanges of views and that touch on the entire

gamut of disarmament and international peace and security issues.

The representative of Mongolia has already touched upon the important features of the present draft resolution. I do not wish to be repetitive. The draft resolution has been made much shorter, clearer and more succinct in terms of its contents. Only the pertinent and relevant preambular and operative paragraphs have been retained.

My delegation would like to express its profound appreciation to those delegations that expressed strong support for the Centre's activities during the general debate of the First Committee. I wish to add that the Centre, working as it does in the interests of peace and disarmament, needs greater financial support to further carry out its useful activities. As the host country, it is gratifying for Nepal to see the growing support for the Centre. Therefore, my delegation would like to reiterate its appeal to Member States, particularly those from the Asia and Pacific region, as well as to international organizations and foundations, to increase their voluntary contributions to the Centre, so that it can further consolidate its activities. We also hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as a similar text was last year.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Mr. Jessen-Petersen (Director, New York liaison office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): First, allow me to express the deep appreciation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the opportunity to address this Committee on the problem of anti-personnel mines. UNHCR urges and supports resolute action towards the total elimination of this indiscriminate and deadly weapon.

As members of an organization responsible for the protection of and assistance to more than 26 million people who have sought safety from persecution, war or massive human rights abuses, UNHCR staff members around the world witness daily the untold suffering caused by landmines. Not only do landmines force people to leave their homes in search of safety, they also imperil their flight and later hinder their return. They prevent reintegration and reconstruction by making land unusable for settlement, cultivation or other economic activities. We have learned first-hand in the former Yugoslavia and in other conflict situations that the presence of landmines obstructs the delivery of life-saving emergency assistance. We have witnessed in Cambodia, Afghanistan and northern Iraq the nightmares revisited by returnees who have the misfortune to take a wrong step.

UNHCR has a responsibility to ensure that voluntary repatriation is conducted in safety and dignity, and that the security of refugees returning home and of humanitarian aid workers is not threatened by the existence of landmines. To reduce the devastating effect of mines on refugees and returnees, UNHCR has become involved in a number of mine-related activities. Our activities are focused on advocacy work in coordination with other organizations, risk-reduction programmes, including mine awareness and information programmes, and the pursuit of effective and coordinated international mechanisms for funding and carrying out landmine demarcation and clearance activities. We have also funded a comprehensive physical rehabilitation and vocational training programme for disabled mine victims as part of UNHCR's assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Although the task of locating and clearing mines does not fall to UNHCR itself, exceptionally UNHCR has funded mine-clearing activities in Cambodia, northern Somalia and Mozambique.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, has repeatedly spoken out against the inhumane and pernicious character of these weapons. At the International Meeting on Mine Clearance, held in Geneva in July 1995, she announced that UNHCR would not knowingly do business with any company which participates in the manufacture or sale of anti-personnel landmines or their components, either directly or indirectly through subsidiaries. A formal disclaimer by companies is now an obligatory part of all UNHCR procurement contracts.

UNHCR will continue to support actions, both global and regional, aimed at a total ban on the manufacture and use of anti-personnel mines. At the recent Ottawa International Strategy Conference, UNHCR, like many other participants, of course fully endorsed the comprehensive plan of action that the Conference adopted. We support the banning of anti-personnel mines within the framework of a legally binding international instrument. We also support the interim measures agreed to at the Conference, which were aimed at reducing the effects of anti-personnel mines, for example through demining and providing assistance to mine victims.

UNHCR welcomes draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46 on this subject, which is before this Committee. On behalf of the many victims — past and future — among whom are those of concern to UNHCR, we urge that the draft resolution be both adopted and acted on.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.